

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1 Claims 1-2 (canceled):

1 Claim 3 (previously presented): A packet flow control method comprising the steps of:  
2 detecting congestion in a first node along a packet flow path between a source  
3 device and a destination device;  
4 identifying a node in said path preceding said first node, wherein said step of  
5 identifying a node in said path includes the step of transmitting a signal to said destination  
6 device requesting path information; and  
7 transmitting to said preceding node a traffic regulation signal used to initiate  
8 flow rate control on flows identified from information included in said traffic regulation  
9 signal, wherein said information included in said traffic regulation signal includes a  
10 destination address.

1 Claim 4 (currently amended): A packet flow control method comprising the steps of:  
2 detecting congestion in a first node along a packet flow path between a source  
3 device and a destination device, including the step of monitoring to detect when said first  
4 node is saturated with packet traffic for a preselected period of time;  
5 identifying a node in said path preceding said first node, wherein said step of  
6 identifying a node in said path includes the step of transmitting a signal to said destination  
7 device requesting path information, and  
8 transmitting to said preceding node a traffic regulation signal used to initiate  
9 flow rate control on flows identified from information included in said traffic regulation  
10 signal, wherein said information included in said traffic regulation signal includes a  
11 destination address.

1 Claim 5 (original): The method of claim 4, wherein said traffic regulation signal further  
2 includes packet flow path information.

1 Claim 6 (previously presented): The method of claim 5, further comprising the steps of:  
2 operating said preceding node to transmit an additional traffic regulation  
3 signal to an additional preceding node to cause the additional preceding node to initiate flow  
4 rate control on flows directed to a destination address identified in said additional traffic  
5 regulation signal.

1 Claim 7 (canceled):

1 Claim 8 (canceled):

1 Claim 9 (currently amended): A packet flow control method comprising the steps of:  
2 detecting congestion in a first node along a packet flow path between a source  
3 device and a destination device;  
4 operating the first node to perform a forced reduction in the flow rate of at  
5 least one packet flow in response to detecting traffic congestion as a function of a base line  
6 flow rate for traffic flowing through the first node; and  
7 identifying a node in said path preceding said first node,  
8 transmitting to said preceding node a traffic regulation signal used to initiate  
9 flow rate control on flows identified from information included in said traffic regulation  
10 signal, and  
11 operating said preceding node to perform a forced reduction in the flow rate of  
12 at least one packet flow in response to detecting traffic congestion as a function of a base line  
13 flow rate for traffic flowing through the preceding ~~network~~ node.

1 Claims 10-16 (canceled):

1 Claim 17 (previously presented): A method of implementing flow control in a  
2 communications network including a first node, a second node and a destination device, the

3 first node being located upstream of the second node on a communications path to said  
4 destination device, the method comprising the steps of:

5           operating the second node to detect when the second node is saturated with  
6 traffic for a period of time, and in response to detecting such saturation, said second node  
7 performs the step of initiating a path determination operation to determine at least a portion  
8 of a path of a flow causing congestion at said second node;

9           operating said second node to receive path information identifying said first  
10 node as part of said path of the flow causing congestion;

11           in response to detecting that said second node is saturated with traffic for said  
12 period of time, operating the second node to send a first traffic regulation signal to the first  
13 node to trigger said first node to perform traffic regulation of flow rates on flows of packets  
14 directed to said destination device;

15           operating the first node, in response to said first traffic regulation message, to  
16 perform forced flow rate reduction operations on at least some flows directed to said  
17 destination node wherein operating the first node to perform forced flow rate reduction  
18 operations includes comparing packet flow rates of packet flows directed to said destination  
19 to at least one flow rate baseline for said first node and dropping packets from packet flows  
20 directed to said destination which have flow rates exceeding the flow rate base line to which  
21 the particular flow rate is compared;

22           further comprising, in said first node,

23           distinguishing, for traffic flow control purposes, between packet flows  
24 corresponding to protocol types which are responsive to congestion control signals and  
25 packet flows corresponding to protocol types which are not responsive to congestion control  
26 signals.

1 Claim 18 (currently amended): A communications system for communicating information as  
2 flows of packets, the system comprising:

3           a first network node including:

- 4 i. congestion control means for detecting congestion at said first network  
5 node;
- 6 ii. traffic flow path determination means for determining the path of at  
7 least one packet flow causing congestion at said first network node, wherein said step of  
8 determining the path includes the step of transmitting a signal to said destination device  
9 requesting path information; and
- 10 iii. early traffic regulation signaling means for transmitting a traffic  
11 regulation signal to initiate traffic regulation at an upstream network node; and  
12 an upstream network node, the upstream network node being coupled to the  
13 first network node, the upstream network node including:
- 14 i. means for receiving traffic regulation signals from said first network node;  
15 and
- 16 ii. flow control means for performing flow rate reduction operations on one or  
17 more traffic flows identified from information included in received traffic ~~flow control~~  
18 ~~messages~~ regulation signals.

1 Claim 19 (currently amended): A communications system for communicating information as  
2 flows of packets, the system comprising:

3 a first network node including:

- 4 i. congestion control means for detecting congestion at said first network  
5 node;
- 6 ii. traffic flow path determination means for determining the path of at least  
7 one packet flow causing congestion at said first network node; and
- 8 iii. early traffic regulation signaling means for transmitting a traffic regulation  
9 signal to initiate traffic regulation at an upstream network node; and  
10 an upstream network node, the upstream network node being coupled to the  
11 first network node, the upstream network node including:
- 12 a. means for receiving traffic regulation signals from said first network node; and

13           b. flow control means for performing flow rate reduction operations on one or more  
14 traffic flows identified from information included in received traffic ~~flow control messages~~  
15 regulation signals; and

16                 a destination node coupled to said first network node for serving as the  
17 destination of at least some of the packet flows passing through the first network node, the  
18 destination node including:

19                     i) means for reconstructing packet flow paths from received information; and

20                     ii) means for transmitting reconstructed packet flow path information to the  
21 first network node in response to a request for path information from said traffic flow path  
22 determination means.

1     Claim 20 (original): The communication system of claim 19, wherein the traffic regulation  
2 signal generated by the early traffic regulation signaling means of the first network node  
3 includes a destination address corresponding to said destination node.

1     Claim 21 (original): The communication system of claim 20,  
2                 wherein the first network node includes traffic flow rate baselines generated  
3 from traffic flowing through the first network node over a period of time; and  
4                 wherein the upstream network node includes traffic flow rate baselines  
5 generated from traffic flowing through the upstream network node over a period of time.

1     Claim 22 (original): The communication system of claim 21,  
2                 wherein the first network node further comprises flow control means for  
3 performing a flow control operation including the dropping of packets from at least one  
4 packet flow as a function of at least one of the first network node traffic flow rate baselines.

1     Claim 23 (original): The communication system of claim 22, wherein the first network node  
2 further comprises:

3 a plurality of packet queues, one packet queue being used to store packets  
4 corresponding to a single or each group of flows to which are to be subject to different flow  
5 rate reduction operations are part of the processing by said flow control means.